

Memo

To: Village Board of Managers
From: Chief of Police *AS*
CC: Shana Davis-Cook, Village Manager
Date: August 19, 2010
Re: Criteria for Speed Humps in the Village

The installation of speed humps on Village streets has been a controversial subject over the past several years. I would ask the Board of Managers to establish simple language for the criteria warranted to install future speed humps on Village streets.

Issues that have arisen over the past several years included:

1. Support speed humps on my street BUT not in front of my house.

Solution: traffic engineer determines location of speed humps, if warranted, not residents.

2. Residents are divided on having speed humps on Village streets.

Solution: Require a simple majority (51%) (one vote per household), of residents who want speed humps on their street. If the Board feels, based on previous public hearings, that the majority of residents are opposed to the idea of speed humps on Village streets, then require 100% (one vote per household) of residents who want speed humps on their street.

3. Traffic speed studies don't support a speeding problem on a street requesting speed humps.

Solution: The Board of Managers has approved the installation of speed humps on streets where speeding was not an issue but rather the perception of vehicles travelling too fast. Speed studies should not be the sole factor in approving or disapproving speed humps. Residents argue that the speed study included holidays, weekends, or summertime when kids were out of school or vacation periods, etc. Refer to solution in number 2 above.

4. Village residents feel that their taxes pay for the maintenance of Village streets and regardless of where they live in the Village, their voice should be heard on the installation of any speed humps on any Village street.

Solution: If residents live on a dead-end street like Montgomery, Grove or Center Street and there is a proposal/petition before the Board of Managers to install speed humps on Kirkside Drive, then those residents on the dead-end streets could have a vote (one per household) on the speed humps because they have no alternate route and must use Kirkside Drive. Again the percentages in number 2 above would apply.

The commonly used means for controlling speed are the implementation of various traffic engineering measures and enforcement. Enforcement is constrained by the availability of police staffing, financial resources, and differing priorities as determined by the police agency, and the effectiveness of enforcement diminishes over time. Traffic engineering options then usually become the means for neighborhood traffic control and include things like speed humps.

Attached are proposed policy and procedures for the installation of speed humps based upon previous experience outlined above. The Board of Managers is highly encouraged to establish criteria for its review of Speed Hump requests. This will enable residents in understanding what the Board will be looking for and more than likely result in the approval of such a request.

Frequently Asked Questions about Speed Humps

Question 1: What are Speed Humps? Speed humps are a design feature (generally made of asphalt) described as a raised area of a street, which deflect the wheels and frame of a vehicle. Speed humps usually extend across the roadway perpendicular to the traffic flow. Speed humps are 3 to 4 inches high and 12 to 24 feet long.

The purpose of speed humps is to reduce vehicle speed. Speed humps generally slow vehicles travelling at typical residential speeds (25 mph) to approximately 12-15 mph. At higher speeds, a vehicle may experience severe jolting.

Question 2: What are the benefits of installing Speed Humps?

- Vehicle speeds – reduction in local street speeds.
- Traffic volumes – diversion of through traffic to other parallel routes.
- Environment – traffic noise may be reduced due to lower speeds but may increase adjacent to the speed hump.

Question 3: What are the disadvantages of installing Speed Humps?

- Traffic may be diverted to parallel streets that do not have traffic calming measures.
- Moderate disadvantages to ambulances, fire vehicles, bicycles, and snow clearing vehicles.
- Noise could increase adjacent to the speed hump.
- Residents may find signs and the appearance of the humps unattractive.

Question 4: What Speed Humps have no effect on?

- Resident access
- On-street parking
- Police enforcement
- Property values

Additional Research Information you should know about Speed Humps?

- Adequate signing and marking of each Speed Hump is essential to warn roadway users of the humps presence.
- Speed humps have not been found to pose a traffic safety hazard when properly designed and installed at appropriate locations.
- Overall traffic noise will generally decrease with fewer vehicles and lower speeds but noise may increase at the Speed Hump.
- Large trucks and emergency vehicles can safely pass over Speed Humps but must travel at low speeds.

GUIDELINES FOR INSTALLATION OF SPEED HUMPS

The installation of speed humps on streets within the jurisdiction of Chevy Chase Village will be considered only if found warranted by the Village Board of Managers. The following guidelines must be followed when submitting a request for the installation of speed humps to enhance driver and pedestrian safety along a given street segment within the Village:

1. When a request/petition is received by the Village Manager, a qualified traffic engineer holding a Professional Engineer certification in the State of Maryland is brought in to determine if the street in question is a good candidate for speed humps.
2. The traffic engineer's study will, if warranted, determine the locations of the speed humps. The traffic engineer may request speed and volume studies (supplied by Village police) and interpret the data to support/reject the need for speed humps.
3. Speed humps within a series are placed at least 175 – 200 feet apart.
4. The first speed hump in a series should be placed at least 50 feet from the nearest intersection, Stop sign, or small radius curve.
5. Traffic control consisting of signs and markings is needed to warn roadway users of the presence of a speed hump. While no minimum standards exist for devices to be used in conjunction with speed humps, devices typically used are the W-8-1 BUMP warning sign in conformance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and markings that show advance word messages (typically BUMP) directly in advance of, or on, the hump. All markings should be installed in conformance with MUTCD guidelines.
6. Speed humps shall not be located over manholes, water valves or storm grates.

PROCEDURES

1. Speed Hump petition/request must include:
 - a. at least 51% of subject area residents (name/address/1 vote per household)
 - b. reason why speed humps are needed
2. Petition/request submitted to the Village Manager.
3. The petition/request will take 60 days to process.

4. Request for engineering study (on contract if not gratis by Montgomery County DOT)
5. Upon receipt of the engineering study, and at least 1 month in advance of the next Board of Managers meeting:
 - a. notices made available to residents in the subject area
 - b. public hearing notices made available to Village residents
 - c. public hearing signs strategically placed in subject area
 - d. notices place in Crier, on Village Listserve and Website

